



First Nations Telecommunications Working Group

Terms of Reference

Objective

The First Nations Telecommunications Working Group (FNTWG) has been established by the First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group (Advisory Group) to develop advice and promote an industry wide response to the *First Nations Digital Inclusion Roadmap 2026 and beyond* (the Roadmap) report recommendations.

The FNTWG's advice will support the Advisory Group in its efforts to progress Target 17 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap: By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion. Target 17 is linked to Outcome 17 of the National Agreement which seeks to ensure that First Nations people can access information and services to make informed decisions about their own lives. The FNTWG will be guided by the National Agreement, along with the Roadmap and the Advisory Group's initial report in the development of its advice.

Function and scope of the FNTWG

The FNTWG will examine and provide advice to the Advisory Group on the telecommunications industry's plans to progress the following Roadmap recommendations:

Access and availability

- Recommendation 2: Increase co-location and shared infrastructure in the telecommunications and broadcasting sector
- Recommendation 3: Increase the sharing of mobile network infrastructure by telecommunications providers in regional and remote locations
- Recommendation 6: Improve the resilience of communications and broadcasting infrastructure, including the resilience of power supplies
- Recommendation 8: Expand community Wi-Fi networks to more underserved communities

Skills and Training

- Recommendation 7: Establish a program for place-based technicians for communications and broadcasting infrastructure repair, installation and maintenance

Affordability

- Recommendation 10: Future proof handset devices used by First Nations consumers
- Recommendation 14: Establish a national device bank
- Recommendation 15: Encourage telecommunications providers to offer prepaid broadband to First Nations consumers





- Recommendation 16: Establish a Donate your Data scheme for First Nations Australians

Data

- Recommendation 23: Establish data sharing arrangements between governments and telecommunications providers
- Recommendation 24: Commit to data sovereignty in government and industry programs which impact First Nations communities and organisations

Customer Service and Community Awareness

- Recommendation 11: Continue to provide non-digital modes of service delivery
- Recommendation 22: Use First Nations media to raise awareness of programs and initiatives
- Recommendation 30: Improve First Nations representation across the telecommunications sector

The FNTWG is not a decision-making body. Its recommendations and/or suggested actions will be provided to the Advisory Group for consideration. As part of its work, the FNTWG will take account the role of existing and emerging technological capabilities and solutions, the views of First Nations communities as well as any further directions from the Advisory Group.

In undertaking its work, the FNTWG may engage with other government agencies, relevant industry sectors, technical experts, consumer groups, end users, Australian communities and governments.

If required, the FNTWG can establish subgroups to review specific recommendations, within its broader workplan. These subgroups will report to the FNTWG prior to each meeting and may include additional members with expertise relevant to the recommendation under consideration.

Membership

Under the guidance of the Advisory Group co-chairs, the FNTWG will be chaired by Ms Lauren Ganley and Mr Sam Dimarco, in their role as members of Advisory Group's Digital Inclusion Expert Panel (Expert Panel). Membership of the FNTWG will be determined by the FNTWG Chairs, in consultation with the Advisory Group co-chairs and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the department).

Membership expectations

Members of the FNTWG must advise the chairs about conflicts of interest that may arise, and the chairs will determine the appropriate mitigation strategy, in consultation with the department.

Discussion within the FNTWG should be considered confidential, unless members explicitly agree that it can be shared beyond the FNTWG, Advisory Group and Expert Panel. Members of the FNTWG should share information in the interests of collaboration and non-competition with each other.

Meetings will be held quarterly, and it is expected that members will attend meetings in person, unless approved by chairs.





Administration and governance

Secretariat support

The FNTWG will receive secretariat support from the department. The secretariat will provide documents to the FNTWG at least five days before feedback or decision is due, except with the prior agreement of the Advisory Group co-chairs.

Governance and reporting

The FNTWG will report to the Advisory Group on a quarterly basis or as otherwise requested. The minutes of FNTWG meetings will also be shared with the Advisory Group.

Information about the FNTWG, including the Terms of Reference, will be publicly available on the Advisory Group's website.

Meeting arrangements

The FNTWG must meet at least four times per financial year. Members must attend all meetings in person, unless prior permission is granted by the chairs. A majority of members must attend the meeting for it to proceed.

All members will usually agree on a decision. If this does not happen, the chairs may ask for members to vote on a decision. If this happens, decisions will be based on the majority agreeing. If there is no agreement, the chairs make the final decision.

If a matter requires out-of-session consideration, a paper will be provided and the majority of members must agree. Members will have five business days to make their decision. If there is no response within five days, this will be accepted as agreement. The secretariat will record this activity in the next meeting's minutes.

Remuneration

Members are expected to fund their own travel and accommodation and will not be compensated for their work on the FNTWG.

